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Decision #17

Cpl Pat

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NRO review(s) completed.

OCT 27 1967

Series C
 #1 & #2 - D/M
 #3 - D/O
 #4 & 5 - R & D
 #6 - CMD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, CIA RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: Oxcart Extension

In accordance with the Ex Com September 29, 1967 reviews of OXCART/SR-71 deployment considerations, and [redacted] from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, DNRO implementation guidance in the form of two Scope Cotton decisions, and revised F.Y. 1968 OXCART fund approvals are attached.

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25X1 The Director, Program D will be authorized an increased F.Y. 1968 [redacted] (Fuel) approval, in recognition of the OXCART extension.

25X1 The revised F.Y. 1968 OXCART fund approvals have considered your [redacted] dated Oct 13, 1967, as adjusted to Scope Cotton decision 17, and discussed with Agency personnel by the NRO Comptroller's office.

25X1 With respect to your [redacted] several comments apply:

25X1 1. Paragraph 1 includes a phrase "which is well within the [redacted] ceiling for OXCART approved in the Presidential and Congressional budgets." It should be realized that the dynamic circumstances in the NRP programs obviate the retention of an amount like this thruout a fiscal year. For example, the current U-2R approvals exceed the President's budget [redacted] the Agency portion of the CORONA program exceeds by [redacted] the Agency portion [redacted] while not finalized, requests indicate that the Agency portion [redacted] could exceed by up to [redacted] Accordingly, internal program adjustments must be made to offset these types of increases.

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2. Your paragraph 2 makes 4 assumptions. It is believed that previous Scope Cotton decisions and new Decision 17 are consistent with assumptions a, b and d. Sub c is of course modified [redacted] and as interpreted in Decision 17.

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25X1 3. Your paragraph 5 indicates a possible changed approach in retention of assets for stored aircraft, and your request for airframe spares included at least [redacted] for procurement above normal consumption replacements. Previously, the assumption has been that 90 days of spares (established upon Agency recommendation) would be retained for 5 operational aircraft.

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and the remaining inventories would be available for other programs, as appropriate. It is now indicated that not only the 90 days, but base, depot and flyaway kit levels should be retained. While I have no objection to this retention at least thru March 31, 1968, I do believe that spares procurements should essentially be limited to that necessary to retain a 90 day level (considering consumption thru March 31, 1968, which may necessitate dipping into the 90 day levels in some cases), and that examinations should be made periodically of the retention levels, particularly in relation to other requirements. For example, it appears illogical to retain much beyond March 31 the base, depot and flyaway kit spares common to the SR-71 aircraft, when these assets could be used to reduce new procurements of SR-71 spares. This may have not been your intent, but I believe this clarification is necessary.

Signed

ALEXANDER H. FLAX
Director

Attachment

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION;
DOD DIR. 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

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Scope Cotton Decision No. 17

A. As a result of ExCom Determinations on September 29, 1967, and an October 23, 1967 memo from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the following modifications to previous Scope Cotton decisions will apply:

1. The three operational Oxcart aircraft at Kadena will remain deployed until not later than February 1, 1968, then return [] where they will continue to fly to maintain proficiency thru March 31, 1968. These will be placed in storage starting in April 1968, at Palmdale.

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2. The three operational Oxcart aircraft [] will continue to fly thru December 31, 1967. As of January 1, 1968, one of these will stop flying, and then be placed in storage at Palmdale during January 1968. The remaining two will continue to fly until not later than February 1, 1968 as backup for the BLACK SHIELD mission, then continue to fly thru March 31, 1968 to maintain proficiency. These will be placed in storage starting in April 1968, at Palmdale. In the event of Oxcart attrition at Kadena, these aircraft are to be used as replacements.

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3. The OXCART aircraft will not be responsible for contingencies other than from Kadena (such as Cuban overflight).

4. The remaining Oxcart test aircraft will fly thru December 1967, then be placed in storage in January 1968, at Palmdale.

5. The Oxcart trainer aircraft will fly thru at least December 1967, and may continue thru January 1968, at CIA option, but is then to be placed in storage at Palmdale.

6. OXCART support planning is to be based on 15 flying hours per month for each operational aircraft, 10 hours per month for the test aircraft, and about 15 hours per month for the trainer aircraft, for the appropriate periods specified in the preceding paragraphs.

7. The Strategic Air Command will deploy three SR-71 aircraft to Kadena, and be ready to assume the BLACK SHIELD operations by February 15, 1968.

B. With respect to OXCART support planning, the following guidance will apply:

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1. [] will not be re-initiated for OXCART applications.

2. The Photographic Materials and Processing [] account is to be re-examined by CIA for implications of the OXCART "three month extension."

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3. The Red Light fuel account will be appropriately adjusted by the NRO Comptroller in conjunction with Director D's office.

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4. The following apply to the OXCART account:

a. Repairable spares on hand at the specialized depot or at [] presently withheld from repair on the expectation of a December 31, 1967 phaseout, will be repaired to the extent required to support the 5 operational aircraft extension as stated in preceding paragraphs A1 and A2. This also applied to future repairable generations thru not later than March 31, 1968. However, this provision does not extend to Aircraft 134 and 122, presently in storage, nor to the one operational aircraft and 121 to be placed in storage in January 1968. The trainer repairables should be separately evaluated, in view of an allowable 1 month extension as outlined in preceding paragraph A5.

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b. Airframe spares support thru March 31, 1968 must necessarily be primarily provided from existing on-hand and on-order base (Kadena and [] and specialized depot Oxcart assets, drawing down to zero assets if necessary. Residual assets common to the SR-71 at Kadena, when the Oxcart aircraft return to [] will be transferred to the SR-71 program. Residual Oxcart peculiar spares should be returned to [] or the specialized depot, as the situation warrants. Additional spares orders are to be based on (1) items which can be delivered by February 28, 1968 against the program authorized herein, plus (2) items for replenishment of stocks to a 90-day level for five operational aircraft, to the extent that forecast usage indicates that residual assets at March 31, 1968 would be below the 90 day level (delivery lead time would not be a limiting factor for these orders). Procurement is not to be initiated for rebuilding depot stocks or flyaway kits.

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c. Engine spares and overhaul support thru March 31, 1968 have been considered in the revised FY 1968 cost approvals.

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d. [] will be extended thru not later than January 31, 1968. However, examinations should be made of contractor work-force vs. workload requirements in the interim period, to attempt to reduce the approximate [] cost.

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e. Current FY 1968 program approvals are considered to essentially cover support for flying from Kadena up to December 1, 1967, and from [] thru December 31, 1967. Revised program cost approvals consider any indicated deficiencies thru Dec 31, 1967, as well as the program extension.

f. It will still be assumed that the application of residual Oxcart assets (in excess of 90 days) to other NRO programs will apply (such as the U-2R), albeit at a later date. If the later availability would unduly impact on program objectives of these other programs, implications and recommendations are to be furnished to the DNRO/NRO Comptroller.

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g. It is still an objective that the Oxcart aircraft be stored, equipment torn-down and moved, and [] be closed before June 30, 1968. Planning should be developed accordingly.

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h. All costs incident to the extension must be held to the minimum necessary.

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Scope Cotton Decision No. 18

Reference Scope Cotton Decisions 17, 14

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Inasmuch as [] will now be open to Oxcart flight operations thru March 31, 1968, in accordance with referenced decision 17, the Tagboard Test program, if not completed by December 31, 1967, may continue [] beyond December 31, 1967, but not beyond March 31, 1968. It is still desirable that the training/operational program for Tagboard be initiated at Beale AFB.

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STAFF REVIEW

I. PROBLEM: Until a high level decision is made for future of the OXCART Program, the support posture will be progressively degraded.

II. FACTS:

A. Official release from [] commitment has not been granted.

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B. BLACK SHIELD has been launched and OXCART Program is currently engrossed in operational employments.

C. Other OXCART operational employments continue loom as serious potential.

D. Production/delivery of hardware remains predicated on October 1967 cut-off. Pipeline time the disturbing factor.

E. Contractor personnel retention/attrition will continue as problem, pending a clear-cut outlook for OXCART program.

III. DISCUSSION:

A. [] gave consideration to performance of BLACK SHIELD during phase-down phases. This is valid assumption using [] operational environment performance.

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III. DISCUSSION: (cont'd)

B. Actual BLACK SHIELD operations from the overseas field environment introduced series of new and unanticipated problems:

1. Effect of constant high humidity
2. Unusual aerodynamic stresses (*ARRONCE/RUNWAY/KTC*)
3. Failures in equipment with no prior history of discrepancies.
4. Flight performance (descent-fuel curves)
5. Need for lengthy work schedules by maintenance personnel.
6. Red-flagging spares and components experiencing high or erratic consumption and need to initiate new procurement.

C. Three options appear at this time on the level of support to be given the OXCART program:

1. Extremely Limited: Assume continue phase-down actions in materials, personnel and facilities support. Live with off-the-shelf assets with minimum, if any, new procurement; flight safety items excepted. Meet operational commitments until 31 December 1967 per established planning.

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III. DISCUSSION: (cont'd)

2. Stabilized Program: Assume establish a base-line support posture to supplement or remedy areas of concern induced through BLACK SHIELD impact. Planning and funding to be on short term "as needed" basis.

3. Normal Growth: Assume OXCART as an on-going program keeping pace with requirements of the National Defense and state-of-the-art developments.

D. Implications attendant to each of the above options that bear consideration are noted:

1. Option Nbr 1: Presents problems in support that would soon become insurmountable. Under current BLACK SHIELD conditions, this would be tantamount to emasculating a race horse at the beginning of its stride. Unless otherwise directed, this "worst-case" option should be avoided.

2. Option Nbr 2: In actuality, a compromise between Options 1 and 2. It permits augmentation and bolstering of those areas shown to be weak through BLACK SHIELD operational employments. The obvious disadvantage to this option would be in the month-by-month funding and the continuous need for short range reviews of the program. It is an option, however, that could be lived with.

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III. DISCUSSION: (cont'd)

3. Option Nbr 3: This option gives recognition to reality and to the situations that currently face the Defense Community. The weapon has been bought and paid for. It's capabilities are only now being exploited under combat conditions. The OXCART program has an ever-increasing potential for time to come. Within this option, it is envisioned that the operational fleet would be augmented by conversion of one test flight article, retention of the other test flight article for performance of tests and evaluations needed to keep pace with operational needs, and storage of one article (TAGBOARD).

IV. SUMMARY:

A. The time lost while awaiting a decision for OXCART will be magnified adversely many times over among the support elements.

B. Recent "about-face" experiences with the expected life of OXCART dictate that the OSA Staff should not fall back on a "worst-case" posture. To try and recoup assets and people at a later date during BLACK SHIELD (or other) operations is less than desirable.

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IV. SUMMARY (cont'd)

C. A carefully managed "Option Nbr 3" appears realistic and presents features that would truly benefit the Government, not only in the near future, but in the long range as well.

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